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5 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Schuster, Edward Lengel, Patricia Fara, Sarah Sawyer)

[0:00:07]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War I Centennial News episode number 112. It's about then, what was happening 100 years ago in the aftermath of World War I. And it's about now, how World War I is being remembered and commemorated, written about and discussed. But most important, the podcast is about why and how we'll never let those events fall back into the mists of obscurity. So join us as we explore the many facets of World War I, then and now. This week on the show, we continue to track our President as he struggles with an unfriendly and unsupportive Congress, and heads back to Paris. Mike Schuster's post is the story of a secret diplomatic mission to Moscow. Dr. Edward Lengel brings us another revealing first person account, this time from another Y girl who stands up a library for the boys. We'll bring you part one of a wonderful article written by author Traci Slatton about technology and the artist, and in this case the artist is her husband, Sabin Howard. We bring in our Women's History Month theme with Dr. Patricia Fara from Cambridge University and author of *Science and Suffrage in the First World War*. Then, we're joined by Sarah Elisabeth Sawyer who tells us about her book *Anumpa Warrior: Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I*, and more. All this week on World War I Centennial News, which is brought to you by the US World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, the Star Foundation, the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, and the Richard Lounsbery Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the commission, and your host. Welcome to the show. 100 years ago this week, President Wilson is back in the US promoting his agenda and tying the League of Nations as essential to the peace process. The previous fall, in the midterm election of 1918, Wilson's Democratic Party loses both the House and the Senate to the Republicans. This week, Wilson is in town, but getting ready to head back to Paris. It's near the end of the legislative term, and to prevent a bunch of Wilson's favorite bills from passing, the Republicans decide to filibuster. Defined in the dictionary as "an action, such as a prolonged speech, that obstructs progress in a legislative assembly." They want to run out the clock, and they do. Congress adjourns without passing a bunch of what Wilson considers critical legislation. When the congress reconvenes, the Republicans will be in power. It's a big week for the Zionists as Wilson throws his support and approves a plan for a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Wilson sails for Paris as a bunch of doughboys finally make it home. With that as an overview, let's jump into our centennial time machine and go back 100 years to the first week of March, 1919, and hear how this plays out in the headlines of the news. We've come back to the first week of March, 1919. Our first headline is an important announcement by President Woodrow Wilson about next year's upcoming 1920 presidential election. Dateline March 1, 1919. Headline: President Talks of Retiring in 1921. Wilson not a candidate. National Committee's men so understand his talk at luncheon. Means to write history. Told his guests he looked forward to that work after March 4, 1921. Dateline March 2nd, 1919. Headline: Filibuster On in Senate. Fate of bond bill in doubt. Knox attacks League draft, proposes Court of Nations, Not League of Nations. Wilson Plans Unchanged by Congress Threat of Delay. Dateline Monday, March 2nd, 1919. Headline: Paris Talks of Revising League Plan. Gregory Goes With Wilson as Advisor. President Approves of New Jewish State. Like so many things, the eventual creation of Israel in 1948 has its roots in World War I and was a point of discussion at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Here is an expanded story from the headlines this very same day. Headline: President Gives Hope to Zionists. Tells Delegation He Approves Plan for a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. Dr. Wise Defends England, Says that Mass Meeting League of Nations Means Justice for the World's Weakest People. And part of the story reads: Approval of the plans of Zionist leaders for the creation of a national Jewish commonwealth in Palestine was given tonight by President Wilson to a delegation of representative American Jewish leaders who spent an hour at the White House in conference with the President over the international status of Jews around the world. The delegation was headed by Rabbi Steven Samuel Wise of New York. Here's the word of promise that was given to the delegation by the President. "As for your representation touching Palestine, I have before this expressed my personal approval of the declaration of the British Government regarding the aspirations and historic claims of the Jewish people in regards to Palestine. Our own government and people are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundation of a Jewish commonwealth." On leaving the White House, Rabbi Wise and Judge Mack went to a mass meeting in an auditorium of the Central High School, the largest meeting place in Washington. 3,000 persons had crowded into it but large numbers were unable to gain admittance. Rabbi Wise spoke of the aspirations and hopes of American Jews and of Jewry around the world, told of his recent visit to Paris, its bearing on the Peace Conference, and discussed the League of Nations, predicting that it would be part of the final Peace Treaty. And on the next day, Dateline: Tuesday, March 4, 1919. Headline: Lodge Proposes Resolution Against the League Draft After 37 Senators Sign Round Robin Opposing It. Filibuster Again Underway Holding Up a Number of Big Bills. Dateline: Wednesday, March 5, 1919. Headline: Wilson Says He'll Stay 'Til It's Over and Bring Treaty Back. League and Peace Treaty Are Inextricably Interwoven. Calls His Critics Ignorant of the Sentiment of America. Criticisms Amaze Wilson, Says Critics Offer No Help. Dateline: Thursday, March 6, 1919. Headline: Wilson Sails with Defiance to Critics. Talk in Washington of League Changes. Wilson Sure of His Ground Says the People Will Understand All He Has Said, Though Politicians Do Not, Thinks Peace Treaty Will Be Ready Sooner Than Expected.

Finds World Outlook Good. U.S.S. George Washington Puts to Sea Amid Salutes, With President and Mrs. Wilson on the Bridge. And as the President sails for Europe, the very next day, coming the other way ... Dateline: Friday, March 7, 1919. Headline: New York's Own Come Home from War. 14,000 of General O'Ryan's 27th Division Acclaimed Here by Welcoming Throngs. 15,000 on Harbor Craft Escort the incoming U.S.S. Leviathan. Relatives Pack the Pier. Throngs at Hoboken Greet Joyfully the Veterans of Valorous War Service. And those are some of the headlines in the newspaper a hundred years ago this week, in a world trying to adjust to the aftermath of the war that changed the world. Now we're joined by Mike Schuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog. Mike, you tell a really great story this week that introduces us to a very fascinating young fellow named William Bullet, who set off on a secret diplomatic mission to Moscow essentially to find out what's up with the Bolsheviks who aren't in Paris. It's a really interesting story that I'd never heard.

[0:10:02]

Mike Schuster: Well, thank you Theo. The headline thus reads: Mission to Moscow. Young American Diplomat to Lead. Meets with Lenin, Finds him Impressive. Leaders in Paris Pay No Attention. Special to the Great War Project. The peacemakers in Paris are complaining about their lack of knowledge about what's happening in Russia. More and more they are considering sending a small mission to Moscow to witness for themselves what's taking place there. Reports historian Margaret McMillan, "Several of the younger Americans including the radical journalist Lincoln Stephens and William Bullet, a young Russian expert with the American delegation who is known to oppose intervention in Russia. They were already suggesting a mission of inquiry. The British Prime Minister Lloyd George agreed it might be a good idea." On February 17th a century ago, Bullet learns that he has been chosen to lead a small, secret delegation to Moscow. Their goal," reports McMillan, "is to take to the Bolshevik leaders there about what sort of conditions they might accept to make peace with the allies. Some of the allies had been in favor of intervention there since the Bolshevik's seized power and took Russia out of the war in 1917. Bullet was delighted," McMillan reports. This assignment puts him at the center of the action. But Bullet's goal puts him at odds with President Wilson and his chief advisor Colonel Edward House who wanted to determine what are the Bolshevik conditions to make peace with their white adversaries. McMillan reports, "Bullet's instructions were to negotiate conditions of peace with the Bolsheviks." Stephens, who went along, concurred. A small mission headed by an insignificant 28 year old might bring back good news. It was expendable if it did not. Bullet and Stephens had a great week in Moscow. They lived in a palace, went to the ballet, ate plentiful caviar, and met frequently with Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. Stephens formed a very positive impression of them. The Bolsheviks, he declared, were getting rid of the causes of poverty, corruption, tyranny and war. Bullet agreed that a great work had been started in Russia. "Both men were deeply impressed with Lenin and he was straightforward and direct," Bullet said. By the end of the week, Bullet thought he had a deal. It included a cease fire and a concession from both sides, the Reds and the Whites. The allies would withdraw their troops which had been stationed there since the Armistice had been declared. For the moment the Whites in Bullet's deal could keep their troops deployed. This is a rosy picture that Bullet and Stephens brought back to Paris. It didn't impress anyone in the Allied Delegations. Indeed, the negotiators paid little attention to what Bullet and Stephens had accomplished. "Bullet was shattered," historian McMillan reports. No one in Paris wanted to hear about his mission, not even the President he admired so much. Nor did Bullet embrace other aspects of the peace treaty that was emerging at the table at Versailles. Not long after this, Bullet submits his letter of resignation. He decides to repair to the Riviera to lie in the sand and in his now jaundiced view, watched the world go to hell. And that's the new these days a century ago from the Great War Project.

[0:13:14]

Theo Mayer: Mike Schuster is the curator of the Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. Now joining us is historian Edward Lengel. His blog is A Storyteller Hiking Through History. And it's filled with first person accounts that provide a really nuanced insight into the era. Last week, Ed introduced us to Katherine Shortall, a young woman serving with the YMCA. This week we meet another Y girl, Miss Ona Rounds. Okay, so when I saw this story, I started thinking about what it must have been like for a young woman raised in any town USA to gather the spirit and the courage to volunteer and ship out to a foreign country and head off into the unknown. There was a term used in those days that really fits, "These women had real Pluck." And what a life altering, empowering experience this must have been for them. Think about that as you enjoy Ed's post.

[0:14:15]

Edward Lengel: Ona M Rounds of California arrived at France at the YMCA in December 1918. She was on her way to a canteen to make donuts when she encountered a doughboy without had served with the famous lost battalion. The soldier had endured a lot and spoke about how he had survived without injury, even though so many of his buddies had been killed or wounded. Holding out his hand, he said, "And never a scratch, not even on a finger. God, I saw my best buddies blown to pieces, nothing left of them, I thought my time would be next. Didn't think there was a chance to get out alive and didn't care. Was so near starved I couldn't have lasted another day. But here I am. Can you believe it? I can't. I have to pinch myself sometimes to be sure I'm alive. Don't know why I am. Some reason I suppose, but I don't know what it is yet." He and the other doughboys watched Rounds and her fellow Y women prepare donuts. "When they were finished," she wrote, "we succeed in supplying each one with a big, fat, round

donut fit for a king and surely they were kings who ate them. But they needed something more substantial than donuts to divert their restless minds." A short time after this encounter, Ona Rounds went to Paris. There the head of the YMCA's American Library Association asked her to form a library at one divisional rest area. She agreed even though she had never worked with books before. At least she hoped the posting would be reasonably comfortable. But during the first night in her new village, she heard a scuffling at her door and turned on her flashlight to discover a young rat come for his evening play. "Undaunted he peered weirdly at the light and then began to roll about and chew the door much as a puppy would gnaw at a bone. No amount of noise or threats either in English or poor French from my side of the door could persuade him to leave his playground. Surely he was different from any American rat that I had ever heard about. And after all my devices to send him home had failed, I left him wrestling with his problem and climbed up in my tall French bed and snuggled under the cover." Rounds approached the task of constructing a new library with the same calm determination. Finding space was only the first problem, though it took days before she set aside the tiny top floor room of a recreation hut, gathering enough books to supply the huge demand was the hardest part. In World War II publishers would anticipate the GI's need for reading matter by issuing millions of cheap paperbacks. But in 1919, most books were thick hardcovers and arrived as donations from the United States. Rounds scoured the area for books in English. Ironically one of her best sources was a local hospital where doughboys took up collections to supply her with books they had already read numerous times. No sooner did she catalog them than they flew off the shelves bound for homesick doughboys in camp or in labor patrols, or back into the very same hospital. Once the library was established, it became the social center of the whole region. Doughboys came from miles around to peruse its offerings, meet friends, and chat with YMCA women like Ona Rounds. Soldiers were always happy to help her with carrying boxes, cleaning, or any other chores that needed to be done. Often though, it seemed that the best service Rounds performed, like other YMCA women, was just to listen. Doughboys would often walk up and sit next to her on a bench and then pour out their feelings about the war, home, and their hopes and fears for the future. With the future in mind, some doughboys scanned the library shelves for textbooks and manuals that would give them a head start on the job skills they would need to return to civilian society. Private soldiers were conscientious about returning their books on time. Officers, perhaps expecting special treatment, not so much. When Ona Rounds scolded an officer gently for having an overdue book, a group of pirates waited until he left shame faced and then laughed out loud. "Might as well get used to be treated like any other man," one said, "won't get salutes when he gets back home.", "Or better grub unless he pays for it," said another soldier. Some civilian donations were disappointing, even offensive. Now and then Rounds and a group of doughboys would eagerly open a box only to discover musty battered old books or in one case even a city directory. This led them to trade cynical remarks on the supposed patriotism of those back home. More often, though, they received the volumes they create the most, Westerns by Zane Gray, Adventures by Jack London, and Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan novels. Other sought poetry by Robert Service, Tennyson and Browning, and plays by Shakespeare. "I shall always remember," Rounds wrote, "the important part books played in helping the boys forget their loneliness and those dreary days of waiting in 1919. Their influence cannot be overestimated. Nor can it be appreciated by those who had no opportunity of seeing homesick faces brighten with a smile and a look of contentment come when a few hours of pleasure were made possible by the delights of a good story and unpleasant surroundings forgotten. Never did the joy of reading come as more a gift."

[0:19:28]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Lengel, Historian, World War I expert, author and storyteller hiking through history. We have links to Ed's post and his author's website in the podcast notes. Okay, let's fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News Now. As our regular listeners know, this part of the podcast is about now, and how World War I being remembered and commemorated, written about and discussed, taught and learned. Here is where we continue to spotlight the surprisingly numerous and significant remembrances and commemoration activities surrounding World War I and World War I themes. For Commission news this week, this is a preview announcement for some exciting events coming up in May. The Navy, Marine Corp and Coast Guard are sailing to New York harbor for their annual Fleet Week and this year the theme is World War I and the Sea Services. The US World War I Centennial Commission is partnering with the Fleet Week team, planning events in New York and New Jersey to educate, commemorate, and honor WWI service. It's all going to happen between May 22nd and the 27th. We look forward to supporting the activities that honor the region, the city, the men, the women, and the history of World War I in New York. All during Fleet Week and Memorial Day 2019. We'll have a lot more information for you over the coming weeks, and we plan on standing up a special website for the event in April. Welcome to our regular segment, a Century in the Making where we offer our listeners a rare insider view of how a national memorial project goes from concept to reality. Writer Traci L. Slatton is an internationally recognized best selling author of historical, paranormal, and romantic novels and more. She's also married to Sabin Howard, the sculptor for the National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. Traci wrote a very insightful article about Sabin's own journey and transformation as a result of working on the project. The article was published in Medium, and she's graciously agreed to allow us to share the article with you. Here's part one. Digital Technology and the Sculptor's Art, Innovation and Imagination. By Traci L. Slatton, published February 21, 2019. There's a moment in a life committed to growth when the call sounds to leave the familiar. It's the beginning of an adventure or the first step into calamity, it's the onset of transformation. For an artist who's honed his skills over decades, the call can be disconcerting. And so it was for Traci's husband,

Sabin Howard, a classical figurative sculptor steeped in the traditions of craftsmanship. And by steeped I mean he had worked painstakingly to master the art of sculpting by hand and clay. By traditional, I refer to the high aesthetics of classical and resonance art. Now there's no shortcut to Sabin's expertise, it was laboriously gained. He spent tens of thousands of hours in the studio posing nude models, studying their anatomy and morphology and gestures. Constructing steel armatures, wrapping a foam core around steel, covering the foam with a base coat of clay and then slowly, slowly accreting tiny scrimms of clay layer after layer until he builds up a workable surface. Sabin's process consists of layering on the clay and then drawing on it to delineate the lines of force, which are muscles turning on bone. He's always looking, looking at the model as he works. Now his looking is anything by literal. He actually tracks the life force energy in the figure, he creatively translates the way life force energy bulges outward. The life force energy is much more than a simple current. It's the fundamental flowing stuff of human consciousness. So it's not just the position of anatomical references, points in space, or volumetric measurements of head, torso, and limb that make the sculpture. Sabin is after the psychology of the individual posing for him. Artists of our time can't make a figurer without taking into account what Freud taught us. By hand, with a narrow metal sculpting tool, Sabin applies pea sized beads onto the clay base coat. He heightens convexity as needed to portray the vitality of the human spirit and the distinctiveness of the human mind moving through flesh. He's saying something both individual and universal with the human body. His grammar is the anatomy of the figure. Bones that show structure and muscles that, as noted above, show energy consciousness spiraling around the bone. Then when the clay is finished, a mold maker molds it. A foundry uses the lost wax coating process to pour a bronze sculpture. A finisher welds pieces together. Then wearing a respirator mask and holding an open flame, Sabin applies chemicals for the patina. He favors iron oxides and liver sulfates that gives the piece a rich, complex finish that is at once organic and industrial. This way of working is ancient, and Sabin thought it would be timeless. Then in 2016, with architect in training Joseph Weishaar, he won the competition to design the National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. The memorial is to be set in Pershing Park, a block from the White House and a block from the National Mall. Weishaar's design calls for a long, bronze relief to commemorate World War I, the diverse soldiers who fought and died in it, and the nurses who helped with compassion and dedication. Sabin, Weishaar and the World War I Centennial Commission collaborated to devise the relief. Now composition is one of Sabin's strong points, the result of decades of studying Rafael, Michelangelo, and other renaissance masters. Still, it took dozens of iterations for him to come up with a design that the World War I Centennial Commission liked. The final design features 38 figures, and tells the story of a soldier's journey. A soldier receives his helmet from his young daughter. He leaves home and joins his fellows on the battlefield. He loses himself in the frenzy of war, he loses brothers in arms to gas and bullets. He falls prey to shell shock. Finally, a changed man, he leaves the battlefield, joins a triumphant processional home. And there hands his helmet back to his daughter. The daughter gazes into the helmet, seeing what's to come, World War II. That was part one of Traci Slatton's Digital Technology and the Sculptors Art, Innovation and Imagination. Join us next week for part two of this fascinating insight into Sabin Howard as an artist as told by his wife, noted author Traci Slatton. We put a set of links in the podcast notes to her website, as well as a really wonderful website she's curating for Sabin himself. What a delightful and talented couple. It's March, and Women's History Month. We're also entering the centennial period when American women finally succeeded in getting the vote. But women's suffrage was a global issue in these days 100 years ago. In fact, the movement had strong proponents in Europe, and especially in the UK. Joining us today to look at the movement in Europe and the effects of World War I on it, is Dr. Patricia Fara. Dr. Fara is Director of Studies at the Cambridge University's History and Philosophy of Science Department. Generally held to be one of the top five HPS departments in the world, she's written on a range of subjects, including a book titled A Lab of One's Own, Science and Suffrage in the First World War. Dr. Fara, welcome to the show.

[0:28:27]

Patricia Fara: Thank you very much. It's very good to be speaking to you.

[0:28:29]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Fara, how did you become interested in the effects of World War I on women's suffrage, or I suppose in general on the Women's Rights Movements?

[0:28:37]

Patricia Fara: I'm interested because it's something that's affected my whole life. I've got a degree in Physics, and I was 1 of only 8 women in a year group of about 200 men. And now a historian, but for me the point of doing history is how to understand how we got from the past to reach the present. Then the whole point of doing that is to try and improve the future. And of course because I teach lots of students who are women, I'm very interested in their position in France today.

[0:29:03]

Theo Mayer: That's wonderful. How would you summarize World War I's effects on the suffrage movement? And also, on how the post war period, with women having taken such key roles during those war years, how did that play out?

[0:29:16]

Patricia Fara: The general story is that as soon as the war started, all the suffrage activities ceased because the women decided that they were going to fight for their country, they were going to be patriotic rather than continuing to campaign for the vote. And in a way, that was extremely good for the movement because by the end of the war, women had been working in factories, they'd be working in science laboratories, they'd been obviously working in hospitals, driving trucks, doing all the sorts of jobs that the men usually did. So I think the attitude towards women changed permanently after the first World War. And also the fact that they had done all that voluntary work during the war was a very, very big factor in obtaining the vote for women over 30 in 1918.

[0:29:58]

Theo Mayer: Well, in the US, people tend to think of the suffrage movement as something that happened here. But in fact it was happening on both sides of the pond. Were there any connections between the two movements?

[0:30:09]

Patricia Fara: Oh, absolutely. The suffrage movement here has been going since the middle of the 19th century. And there are individual leaders here who went over to America. And then there were American women who came over here. There was one particular person called Rae [Streche] who part of the Bloomsbury set, she was a relative of Virginia Woolf, and her aunt was President of Bryn Mawr. So there was a lot of contact between this woman Rae Streche and her aunt in Bryn Mawr who was very, very active in the suffrage movement. So Rae Streche went over before the war and went touring around America and giving talks and going to suffrage demonstrations. One big difference, I believe, between America and here is that delegations for American women came over to Britain to find out what was happening. And one thing they did fundamentally disapprove of was the violent tactics of the suffragettes, the people who were pitching bricks through windows, chaining themselves to the railings, attacking the police. These were the women who were being put in prison. They were being force fed, they were being treated terribly, terribly badly. And American women didn't go down that route.

[0:31:10]

Theo Mayer: Well, let's talk about our book. What do you consider your favorite or maybe the most important or most memorable stories that came out of your research?

[0:31:19]

Patricia Fara: What I was trying to do in this book is focus on a very small group of women that nobody has ever written about before. And these were women who were engineers, they were doctors, they were scientists during the first World War. They were already trained. And as soon as the war started, they took over the jobs that men were doing. One fascinating woman was a woman called Isabelle [Elmsly]. And she was a doctor, she trained in Scotland, and she went out to Serbia during the war. And Isabelle Elmsly and a lot of other women were out in Serbia building hospitals, they were treating wounded soldiers, they were looking after the local population, they were working under most appalling conditions. And they saved the lives of very, very many soldiers out on the Eastern front. Then of course as soon as the war ended, Isabelle Elmsly she stayed out there until 1919 and she treated a lot of the local population who lived in such remote places that they'd never seen a doctor before. And she was curing all sorts of chronic problems like club feet and cleft palates that were being operated on here. Then she came back to Britain. And in Serbia she is still very, very much remembered. There is a hospital named after her, there's postage stamps commemorating her. Here, she's very quickly got forgotten, she got married, which meant that she could no longer go on working as a doctor because married women weren't allowed to be paid as professional doctors. She wasn't allowed to do surgery because surgery was a man's specialty and she had to go back to doing gynecology and pediatrics, which is what most women doctors ended up doing.

[0:32:49]

Theo Mayer: Patricia, let me ask you about that. Was it by law or was it by custom that they weren't allowed to work after they got married?

[0:32:57]

Patricia Fara: That was by law. She did work, but she couldn't be paid for it. It was the same with teachers, with civil servants, with lawyers. And that went on until the 1920s. So as soon as you got married, you had to stop working. It's absolutely extraordinary. There was another woman Hertha Ayrton slightly earlier, who she was the first woman who was allowed to read her own paper at the Royal Society London. Before that, the man had to read a paper for her. And she was a very, very distinguished engineer, she'd won all sorts of medals and prizes. And she gave her paper. Then afterwards, someone nominated her for fellowship of the Royal Society. They thought very hard and they said, "No, she can't be a fellow of the Royal Society because she's married." So the first female fellows of London's Royal Society weren't elected until 1945. We were ahead of you in getting the vote. We got the vote in 1918. But we were behind you in very many other respects, particularly at Cambridge. At Cambridge, although women had been going to University at Cambridge since the end of the nineteenth century there were colleges specifically for women and

hey followed the same degree courses as the men, they passed all the exams. There was one woman Filipa Forcet who came top of her year in mathematics, but no women were allowed formally to graduate from Cambridge University until 1948, which is very recent.

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Theo Mayer: That's shockingly recent.

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Patricia Fara: Right, isn't it? Yes. That's one thing that I say to my students because quite often students are in despair because there's still the statistics that women aren't getting to the top of their professions, they're earning less than men on a whole. But I encourage my students to think how much matters have changed, certainly since the first World War. But also how much the situation has improved just in my own lifetime.

[0:34:39]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Patricia Fara is Director of Studies at Cambridge University's History and Philosophy of Science Department and author of a Lab of One's Own, Science and Suffrage in the First World War. We have links for you in the podcast notes. Coming back to this side of the pond, we're joined by Sara Elizabeth Sawyer, who's self described as a Story Archeologist. I like that. So does the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Indians who honored her through their Artist Leadership Program for her work in preserving Choctaw Trail of Tears stories. Sarah is in fact a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. And she is author of Anumpa Warriors, Choctaw Code Talkers in World War I. Translated from Choctaw, Anumpa Warrior means language warrior. Sarah, welcome to the podcast.

[0:35:34]

Sarah Sawyer: Halito Theo. Thank you for having me.

[0:35:37]

Theo Mayer: And I think what you just said is hello in Choctaw.

[0:35:40]

Sarah Sawyer: Halito, it's our traditional greeting.

[0:35:42]

Theo Mayer: Oh, thank you. So Sarah, let me open the conversation with a question about you. You were on quite a journey to write this novel about these men, figuratively and literally. Tell us about that.

[0:35:54]

Sarah Sawyer: It began about three years ago when I realized the World War I Centennial was coming up. And I got busy in it because I wanted to make sure that those original code talkers were a part of the narrative around the World War I commemoration. So I did research with our Tribal Historic Preservation departments, geology, School of Language, the Choctaw Code Talker Associations. And in April of 2018, I was able to travel to France and go to the battlefield sites at St. Etienne and Forest Farm where most of these men fought at.

[0:36:30]

Theo Mayer: What was the status of the Choctaw nation in 1917?

[0:36:33]

Sarah Sawyer: At that point, the Choctaws lived like their non native counterparts. They were farmers, ranchers, business men, lawyers, just regular family people. And many of the Choctaw boys attended Armstrong Academy, which was a boarding school. According to my research, they were forbidden to speak their language there. And it was a difficult time for our people. A time of great transition and heartbreak. But they still had hope for the future.

[0:37:01]

Theo Mayer: These men, when they went in, were they volunteers or draftees, generally?

[0:37:06]

Sarah Sawyer: In general, the Choctaw Code Talkers were volunteers, some of them were drafted. But one of them was Choctaw Chickasaw Scotch and Irish Otis Leader, and he volunteered after being accused of being a German spy. He enlisted right after America entered the war in April 1917. And was among the first troops to land in France with his machine gun battalion in the first division the big red one. Otis Leader experienced pretty much everything in the war except to be killed. He was wounded at least twice, gassed three times. He experienced losing his buddies with the first American casualties at Bath Lamont, and captured 17 Germans with an empty rifle. In the end, General Pershing called him one of the war's greatest fighting machines. And he was a Choctaw Code Talker.

[0:37:53]

Theo Mayer: That's a great story. Tell us the story about how using their native tongue as a cipher came out.

[0:38:00]

Sarah Sawyer: In the 142nd Infantry, they formed Company E which was known as the All-Indian Company. And it included a large number of Choctaws. They had their first baptism of fire at St. Etienne. It was their first full engagement and it was a complete disaster. And Colonel Blur of the 142nd Infantry stated the disaster at St. Etienne was largely caused due to lack of secure communications. So after that battle, and after several days, the Germans retreated from St. Etienne and the 36th chased them down to an area known as Forest Farm. So the 142nd officers knew that the Germans were tapping in, they were listening to all their communications. The French had already tried twice to take the Forest Farm Salient and had failed. There are several theories on who originally suggested using native languages. I believe that it probably came from several people, the officers and the enlisted men who realized what the problem was. And they had only the company their, Company E and they said, "Let's put them on the phone." So their commanding officer selected six to with who spoke English and Choctaw fluently. Once they were selected, they were put on telephone lines on the front line and also back at the headquarters and transmitted messages to set up the attack on Forest Farm and October 27th. The attack by every officer account went by the book which was unprecedented. Especially for World War I. Colonel Alfred Blur of 142nd Infantry was their commanding officer and he commented, commending the Choctaws and the use of their language. And credited it with the taking of Forest Farm, that victory there.

[0:39:47]

Theo Mayer: Did that continue as a sort of a normal process that turned into doctrine?

[0:39:51]

Sarah Sawyer: After the Battle of Forest Farm, which they were pulled out on October 28th for a rest, and they set up a training. And at least two Indian officers worked with the Choctaws to develop a code. They found in speaking the language that they lacked some words, like for machine gun, artillery. So they came up with alternatives in the Choctaw language, like one corn, two corn, three corn for first battalion, second battalion, third battalion. And little gun shoots fast for machine gun. So they would do those words in the Choctaw language so that even if someone back home who spoke Choctaw heard the code, they wouldn't understand what was being talked about. So they did train through there until the Armistice on November 11th. And at that point there are several stories where the military swore them to secrecy, that they were not to speak about their special service. Then on the other hand, the Stars and Stripes published an article in January of 1919 talking about the Choctaw Code Talkers and how the Germans had taught their officers everything but had failed to teach them Choctaw. And that particular battle there, in the [inaudible] offensive is credited with helping shorten the war. And I do believe that was a great turning point.

[0:41:06]

Theo Mayer: What are the few key things that our listeners would remember about the Choctaw Code Talkers? Or the Choctaw Nation in general?

[0:41:14]

Sarah Sawyer: The Choctaw Code Talkers played a huge role in World War I. But they also played it in World War II, the second World War. Some credit the special service as leading to the IDN confidence to use Indian languages in World War II. And there were four Choctaws who were credited as Code Talkers in the second World War. So their legacy continued. We today are once again a sovereign Indian nation. We regained our sovereignty in the 1970s. And we're currently working to revitalize our language and our culture. We have many first speakers who are still living today. One of the things that I came across in my research was an actual message that was transmitted by the Choctaws. I had that translated into Choctaw. And at the book release celebration, on the anniversary of the Battle at Forest Farm, we had one of our Choctaw Color Guard, who's also a veteran and a Choctaw first speaker who read off that message. So literally 100 years, maybe to the very hour, that that message was originally transmitted, it was spoken again in the Choctaw Nation in Southeast Oklahoma.

[0:42:17]

Theo Mayer: Sarah, thank you so much, both for the work that you're doing, and for sharing your story with us.

[0:42:23]

Sarah Sawyer: Absolutely. Yakoke, thank you for having me Theo.

[0:42:25]

Theo Mayer: What was Yakoke?

[0:42:27]

Sarah Sawyer: Yakoke means thank you in Choctaw.

[0:42:29]

Theo Mayer: Well, thank you.

[0:42:30]

Sarah Sawyer: Absolutely. And we also don't have a word for goodbye in Choctaw, we say, "Chi pisa lachike," I will see you again soon.

[0:42:37]

Theo Mayer: Sarah Elizabeth Sawyer is a Tribal Member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and author of *Anumpa Warrior*, Choctaw Code Talkers in World War I. We have links for you in the podcast notes for Sarah's website and her Facebook page. Welcome to our segment called *Speaking World War I*, where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. This week's word is scrounge. Now Merriam Webster defines the word as: to steal, swipe, or to get as needed, foraging, scavenging or borrowing. Now, personally I still say things like, "I'm going to scrounge around in my desk draw to find a pencil." The term is British in origin, but was eagerly picked up by the doughboys. In a book called *Behind the Barrage*, published shortly after World War I, British writer G. Goodchild discusses the term. Quote, "In the category of odd jobs came scrounging. Scrounging is eloquent army-ese that covers pilfering, commandeering, pinching and many other familiar terms. You may scrounge for rations, kits, pay or a leave. Signalers are expert at it as they usually scrounge for wire. Scrounging for wire was legitimized by the war office. And they called it by the gentler name of salving. We were informed that it was our duty to economize and the cost if the war by salving the wires that were disconnected by shell fire. Or which appeared to be serving no useful purpose. We had first to tap to on the line with a field telephone and if we got no response, the wire was ours. We made scrounging a daily affair and not infrequently scrounged wire that was not disconnected and belonged to other batteries." Scrounge, to appropriate or to misappropriate. And this week's work for *Speaking 101*. We have links for you in the podcast notes. This week in *Articles and Posts*, we're highlighting the stories you'll find in our weekly newsletter the *Dispatch*. Headline: 369th Experience and National Spotlight During Black History Month. 369th Experience project leader Stephanie Neil and noted historian and member of the Commission's Board of Historical Advisors, Dr. Jeffrey Salmons were featured on New York City's ABC7 *Here and Now Show*. February 2019 has been a very busy time for telling the story of African American heroes of World War I. And the story of the 369th regimental band and the centennial tribute called the 369th Experience are a wonderful part of telling that story. Headline: Kansas City Premier Screening of the Documentary *Pershing's Paths of Glory*. Slated for March 15th. In recognition of the 125th anniversary of the national Society of the Pershing Rifles, the society is hosting a major premier even in Kansas City. *Pershing's Paths of Glory* is a documentary that tells the exceptional story of one of America's greatest military leaders General John J. Pershing. The story is told by Pershing's living legacy, members of the National Societies of the Pershing Rifles, the Pershing Angels, and the Blackjacks. Headline: The Polar Bear Expedition, the true story behind America's forgotten war in communist Russia. Even as the German's surrender was being signed in a railway car near Paris, on November 11, 1918, even as throngs were celebrating in London and New York, Captain Robert Boyd and the men of the US Army's 339th Infantry Regiment Company B were fighting for their lives against hundreds of Bolshevik troops in the snowy bitterly cold wastes of Northern Russia. Historian James Carl Nelson, author of the *Polar Bear Expedition*, the *Heroes of America's Forgotten Invasion of Russia*, describes the quote somewhat bizarre series of events that had brought this contingent of doughboys to this remote and desolate place. Headline: American Presence in Germany From 1916 to 1923 Had a Lasting Effect on the Culture, Ideology, and Politics of the Region. Few people have heard much, if anything, about the American occupation of Germany that followed World War I and lasted until 1923. Kristy Ann Reeves, from the Arizona State University School of International Letters and Cultures, thinks that should change. And hopes an exhibit now on display at ASU will help. On the 100th anniversary of the presence of American occupational forces in the region, the exhibit aims to educate about the interaction between the Americans and the people who were once their military opponents. Read all these amazing stories through the links that you'll find in our weekly *Dispatch* newsletter, it's a short and easy guide to lots of World War I news and information. Subscribe to this wonderful free weekly guide at ww1CC.org/subscribe. Or follow the link in the podcast notes. And that wraps up episode number 112 of the award winning *World War I Centennial News* podcast. Thank you for listening. We want to thank our great guests, crew and supporters including Mike Schuster, Curator for the Great War Project blog; Dr. Edward Lengel, Military historian and author; Traci Slatton for allowing us to serialize her article *Digital Technology and the Sculptor's Art*; Dr. Patricia Fara, historian and Philosopher of Science; Sarah Elizabeth Sawyer, Story Archeologist and author. Thanks to Mack Nelson and Tim Crowe, our interview editing team; Katz Laslow, the line producer for the show; JL Miso and Dave Kramer for their research and script support. And I'm Theo Mayer, your producer and host. The US World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate and educate about World War I. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I, including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators, their classrooms and the public. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across our country. And of course, we're building America's

National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. As well as our other sponsors, the Star Foundation, the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation and the Richard Lounsbery Foundation. The podcast and a full transcript of the show can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cbn. You'll find World War I Centennial News in all the places that you get your podcasts and even using your smart speakers by saying, "Play WWI Centennial News podcast." The podcast Twitter handle is @theww1podcast. The Commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both @ww1cc and we're on Facebook at WWI Centennial. Thank you for joining us. And don't forget, keep the story alive for America by helping us build the memorial. Just text the letter WWI or WW1 To the phone number 91999. (music) Thank you for listening. So long.

[0:51:24]